Salt Production

†*34. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) Whether it is a fact that the production of salt is on the decrease continuously in the last few years in the country;

(b) If so, the decrease recorded in the production of salt from the year 2005 to 2008; and

(c) The amount of hike in the price of salt in the country due to such shortage?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) There is decrease in salt production in subsequent years as compared to 2005.

(b) The details of salt production and increase/decrease in quantity during the last three years are given below:

Year	Production (in lakh) tonnes)	(-) decrease/(+) increase with reference to previous year (in lakh tonnes)
2005	19924	
2006	180.86	(-) 18.38
2007	183.89	(+)3.03

(c) There is an increase of about Rs. 100=Rs. 150 per tonne of salt at the production centres. The price increase at the production centres coupled with increase in other input costs like packing material, transportation cost by rail/road etc. have resulted in increase in wholesale and retail prices of edible salt. The increase is about Rs. 1/- per kg. for refined/ vacuum edible salt and Rs. 0.50 per kg. for non-refined edible salt.

The refined/vacuum edible salt is available at the retail level at a price ranging from Rs. 9-10 per kg. and non-refined variety is available at a price of Rs. 3.50—Rs. 5.00 per kg. in consumer packs.

Special package for importers affected by rupee appreciation

*35. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry is considering any special package to importers who suffered losses due to the rise in the value of rupee;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the Ministry will recommend such packages for NRIs who also suffered set-backs due to the unprecedented rise of rupee?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMALNATH): (a) to (c) Importers have not suffered any loss, rather gained because of the low cost of imports on account of rupee appreciation. Government announced a series of measures for exporters only for immediate relief from the impact of rupee appreciation. There is no proposal for any special package for NRIs, who may be importers of Indian goods.

Attack on Hindi Speaking People in Maharashtra

†*36. SHRI MANGANILAL MANDAL: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) has issued a dictate to non-Maharashtrian people, particularly belonging to Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and other people, entrepreneurs and labourers of other Hindi speaking States asking them to leave Maharashtra;

(b) whether it is also a fact that non-Maharashtrian people were beaten in Mumbai, Kalyan, Thane and other cities from the first week of February, 2008, their shops were looted and they were dragged from trains, buses and taxis and insulted and beaten; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and Government's point of view in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SHRIPRAKASH JAISWAL): (a) According to information received from the State Government of Maharashtra, no such dictate has been issued.

(b) and (c) According to available information, in the wake of efforts by some activists of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) to create disturbances in a political rally in Mumbai on 3rd February, 2008, a number of incidents of demonstrations, burning of effigies of political leaders, pelting of stones on/damage to buses and other vehicles, and damage to private and public properties took place in Mumbai and some other parts of Maharashtra during the first to third weeks of February, 2008. According to the State Government, there were 336 incidents during this period, of which there were 8 incidents of assault on North Indian labourers/workers and some cases of damage to property like shops, stalls, handcarts etc., in which 8—10 persons are reported to have been injured.

The Ministry of Home Affairs had remained in touch with the State Government and asked them to take all necessary measures to maintain peace and normalcy in the State and take firm action against elements indulging in any kind of violence or illegal activities. 13 Coys of additional Central Para-Military forces were also provided to the State Government. The State Government has informed that prompt and firm action was taken against the culprits, and 1575 persons were arrested for substantive offences in addition to preventive action against 5159 persons. Effective deployment of the Police and security arrangements have been made to prevent any untoward incident and build confidence and a sense of security among all sections of the people.

Research made by CSIR

*37. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether country is lagging behind several countries in different fields of science and

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.